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A MODEL OF STRATEGY MIX FOR PLANNED SOCIAL CHANGE

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College of Commerce and Business Administration
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

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October 31, 1978

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Summary:

A conceptual model based on attitude-behavior discrepancy is proposed as a way to choose specific strategies for planned social change. It is argued that the universal approach practiced by change agents is less efficient and the reliance on a single strategy such as dissemination of information, economic incentives, propaganda or mandatory rules often results in negative impact.

The model suggests utilization of a combination of reinforcement, inducement, rationalization and confrontation strategies depending on the population distribution among the four cells of the attitude-behavior discrepancy matrix. A two group discriminant analysis is proposed as a way to quantify attitudes and estimate population proportions.

A Model of Strategy Mix for Planned Social Change

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Introduction

Planned social change refers to active intervention by change agents with a conscious policy objective to bring about a change in magnitude and/or direction of a well identified social behavior by means of one or more strategies of change. Planned social change, therefore, consists of the following characteristics:

a. Social behavior to be changed must be identified and hopefully well defined.

b. There should be a policy objective with respect to magnitude and/or direction of social change.

c. Some entity should be earmarked as the change agent with appropriate resources or powers.

d. It utilizes one or more strategies of change.

The above definition of planned social change, therefore, excludes the following types of social changes:

a. Changes which are evolutionary, accidental, or random phenomena.

b. Changes which arise by the process of contagion as is so typical in the diffusion of innovations.

The contagion process is merely a behavioral phenomenon. Of course, it can be harnessed and utilized as a strategy by a change agent to achieve a policy objective in a given social change arena. However, by itself, it does not constitute planned social change as often implied in the diffusion of innovation literature.

Planned social change is, therefore, a managerial rather ıan a behavioral task which requires making decisions as to ıich strategies to use, in what combination and for which tar-ːt groups in order to achieve policy objectives related to ːinging about a pre-specified magnitude and/or direction change ı a given social behavior. It is the managerial task of choos-ıg the right strategies from among many strategies available ı the change agent. As such, it must possess elements of ːrategic planning and decision making.

Strategies of Planned Social Change

The change agent as manager of planned social change has ıny strategies at his disposal. These are broadly classified ıto the following eight categories:

Informing and Educating the Public. This is a dissemination of information strategy which is gaining considerable attention among the change agents. It entails making choices as to content, media and style of communication and especially as to the choice of mass media vs. more direct media. Examples include numerous booklets and brochures on

consumer information as well as public service announcements on mass media.

2. Persuasion and Propaganda. The recent trend in planned social change toward borrowing from the marketing practices is based on the belief that the public needs to be sold on the idea of planned social change. Therefore, the art of persuasion and selling so prevalent in the commercial world may be useful. Persuasion and propaganda implies a biased presentation of facts and figures in an aggressive manner to impact and change the public attitudes toward the planned social change. Examples include the recent campaigns about energy conservation, drinking and driving as well as anti-smoking.

3. Delivery Systems. The emphasis in this strategy is to minimize the accessibility problems associated with the usage of many public services. This entails offering flexible time schedules, more delivery contact points, and in general, making the public feel welcomed in making use of the public services associated with a specific planned social change. Examples include community centers, summer programs for the ghetto children, distribution of contraceptives in remote parts of India, and school lunch programs.

4. Economic Incentives. This is a relatively older strategy based on the economic principles of cost-demand relationships. It presumes that economic incentives may provide motivating force for the public to behave in the desired direction of social change. Economic incentives include not only cost reduction tactics but also include offering

cash or other tangible incentives. Examples include tax rebates, tax credits for home insulation, cash payments for vasectomy or offering transistor radios and other highly desired products for birth control or greater usage of public transportation.

5. Economic Disincentives. This is an age old strategy based on the economic principle that demand for a behavior can be reduced or dampened by adding economic disincentives. Economic disincentives includes extra duties, tariffs, surcharges, taxes and other similar economic burdens to the cost of the product or service identified with a particular social behavior which the change agent wants to alter in its magnitude and/or direction. They are presumed to demotivate the public from manifesting a particular social behavior. Examples include heavy taxes levied on hard liquor, cigarettes and many luxury goods and services.

6. Social Controls. Social controls refer to group identifications and norms, values and pressures which peer groups bring to bear for both ensuring and sustaining social change in the planned direction. In many ways, social controls are the most traditional ways of planned social change. They are built into the norms and values of various social and institutional groups as small as the family unit and as large as the cultural aggregates. Examples of social controls include Alcoholics Anonymous, Weight Watchers, church and charity groups, community activity groups, and the PTA as well as family, peer reference groups and other socioeconomic groups.

7. Clinical Counseling and Behavior Modification. The psychiatric and psychoanalytic programs tailored for each deviant individual as well as small group therapy programs are examples of this strategy. The basic premise is that the desired social change is very specific and limited to a small percentage of the total public and their behavior has high degree of social or personal consequences. The clinical counseling and behavior modification strategies involve the unlearning of socially undesirable behavior or learning of a socially desirable behavior among a hard core of individuals in the society toward which the planned social behavior is directed by the change agent. It often entails unraveling the deep-seated emotional or physical motivations which lead to the behavior in question.

8. Mandatory Rules and Regulations. This strategy is based on the concept of power endowed in the change agent by the legal-political process. The mandatory rules and regulations are by definition, involuntary measures and universal in nature. The individual in the society has no choice in obeying or disobeying them. Furthermore, the change agent possesses the power to utilize punitive measures to ensure their compliance. One common denominator underlying all mandatory rules and regulations is the curtailment or elimination of individual choice with respect to a given behavior. Examples of mandatory rules and regulations are laws related to speeding, violent behavior, product safety, physical safety and, in general, what the society has declared as blue collar or white collar crimes.

There is a considerable degree of empirical and experimental evidence in terms of the relative effectiveness and utilization of these alternative strategies of planned social change. A careful assessment of this evidence as well as the limited degree of theoretical research points out the following observations:

1. Most of the strategies can be mapped on a two-dimensional space whose axes are voluntary-involuntary and informational-motivational dimensions.

2. The choice of a specific set of strategies seems to be dictated by the ideological value system and, therefore, varies across nations and cultures. For example, the U. S. seems to be inclined toward voluntary strategies whereas many of the socialistic countries seem to be inclined toward involuntary strategies.

3. Very often, only one single strategy is utilized by the change agent to bring about the planned social change both at a point in time and sometimes over a period of time. Simultaneous utilization of several strategies is conspicuously lacking. In other words, the change agents have practiced a universal approach as opposed to segmentation approach toward planned social change.

4. There is no theory of strategy mix. We really don't know what is an optimum mix of different strategies for a specific planned social change situation. It would seem that the change agents believe in a particular strategy based on some ideological value system and utilize it universally without regard to allocating resources in an optimal manner

among a mixture of strategies.

The purpose of this research paper is to provide a model of strategy mix for planned social change. Based on the concept of attitude-behavior discrepancy, a model is proposed which provides insights to the change agent about the optimum mix of several strategies for a specific planned social change.

A Conceptual Model of Strategy Mix

The attitude-behavior discrepancy construct implies that there are situations in which people's attitudes and behavior are at odds with each other. For example, many people possess positive attitudes toward wearing seat belts but they don't buckle up. Similarly, many people go on a diet or take medicine but they don't enjoy it. Finally, there are situations in which attitude and behavior are highly consistent with each other. People seem to manifest certain behaviors toward which they have positive attitudes (contributions to charity) and avoid those behaviors toward which they have negative attitudes (deviant behavior).

Except in a very homogeneous society, it is not likely that all the people will manifest the same degree or direction of attitude-behavior discrepancy, especially toward socially relevant behaviors. For example, some people do not smoke because they don't enjoy smoking, others smoke because they enjoy it, and still others smoke but don't enjoy it, and finally

those who enjoy smoking but do not smoke due to occupational or social contingency.

Similarly, some couples practice birth control and they have positive attitude toward birth control, others avoid it because they have negative attitudes, still others practice birth control but more out of necessity, and finally some believe in birth control but do not practice it.

This clearly suggests that the change agent must use different types of strategies for each segment of the above four attitude-behavior discrepancy groups. While a particular strategy may be effective in one segment, it is not likely to work across all four segments. Furthermore, the choice of specific strategies and their optimal mix should be a function of the magnitude and direction of the attitude-behavior discrepancy prevalent in a given social phenomenon which needs to be changed on a planned basis.

The conceptual framework suggests that there are four major strategies of planned social change, each one most appropriate for each of the four combinations of attitude-behavior discrepancy. This is summarized in Table One:

Table 1

A Typology of Strategy Mix for Planned Social Change

Attitude	Desirable Behavior: Engaged	Desirable Behavior: Disengaged
Positive	Reinforcement Strategy (Dissemination, Mandatory Rules)	Inducement Strategy (Delivery Systems, Social Controls)
Negative	Rationalization Strategy (Economic Incentives, Propaganda)	Confrontation Strategy (Economic Disincentives, Behavior Modification, Mandatory Rules)

Each of the four major types of strategies and their specific parts are described below.

Reinforcement Strategy. When attitudes and behavior are consistent as well as in the positive direction toward the desirable social behavior, the strategy of reinforcement seems most appropriate for sustaining the planned social change. It refers to both psychologically and legally rewarding people for engaging in behavior which they enjoy and which the change agent wants to continue and sustain it. For example, if the vast majority of people believe in speed limits and obey them, the change agent should offer psychological rewards by way of safety citations and merit certificates as well as generate mandatory rules for speed limits and enforce them. Reinforcement strategy includes informing and educating the public as well as

enforcement of mandatory rules and regulations.

Inducement Strategy. When people possess positive attitudes toward a desirable social behavior but do not or cannot engage in the concomitant behavior, the strategy of inducement is the most appropriate strategy to utilize. It refers to minimizing or removing organizational, socioeconomic, time and place constraints which intervene between the positive attitude and the consequent behavior. For example, many people have positive attitude toward carpooling or vanpooling but they do not engage in that behavior because they find it less convenient in terms of their work schedule. It is, therefore, desirable to offer an improved delivery system by going through the employer organization and rescheduling the time and place dimensions of the person's work schedule.

Alternatively, it is possible to use social controls to induce people to engage in the behavior. For example, motivating people to act as volunteers or contribute to charity by social pressures.

Thus, inducement strategy includes improved delivery systems and generating social controls.

Rationalization Strategy. It is most appropriate when people are currently engaged in a desirable social behavior but they don't enjoy it and have a negative attitude toward it. Often, this is due to lack of choice or due to a temporary situation.

Rationalization strategy includes utilization of persuasion and propaganda principles in which information is packaged in a biased way in favor of the desirable social behavior. Often, this entails partial disclosure of facts, exaggeration of positive aspects in the given social behavior and minimization of negative consequences.

An alternative to rationalization by propaganda is offering economic incentives to the person to continue engaging in the behavior even though he does not like it. Both psychological and economic strategies are meant to help rationalize his behavior.

Confrontation Strategy. When both attitude and behavior are consistent but in the negative direction toward a desirable social behavior, the appropriate strategy is the confrontation strategy. This is the most painful and difficult process of planned social change. The change agent must, therefore, think very carefully and use it in the appropriate attitude-behavior discrepancy situation. Furthermore, he must also decide whether it is worth the effort to change the social behavior in light of negative public opinion as well as high costs associated with this strategy.

If the decision is in favor of bringing about social change through the confrontation strategy, there are two distinct avenues of change. The first avenue involves people's unlearning or unfreezing of old habits as well as learning of new and more desirable behaviors and attitudes. This is also referred to as

the relearning process. It can be accomplished by a combination of economic disincentives, and the use of clinical counseling or behavior modification techniques in extreme cases. For example, it is possible to motivate people to shift from hard liquor to other alcoholic or semi-alcoholic beverages by way of tariffs and subsidies or cut down automobile driving by making the possession and driving of automobiles very costly as is often true in several European countries.

A second avenue requires the change agent to utilize his power base with which to create blockades toward the existing behavior as well as rechannel people's motivations toward the desirable social behavior. This is referred to as the rechanneling strategy. It entails both economic disincentives as well as evoking mandatory rules which take away the freedom of choosing the less desirable social behaviors. For example, the government can restrict driving through the central business districts of metropolitan areas in order to minimize energy and traffic problems. It can mandate the use of lead-free gasoline by restricting the choice of certain types of gasoline engines. Finally, it can provide tax disincentives to motivate the suppliers and the users from producing and marketing gas-guzzler cars. The three types of strategies most appropriate in this respect are, therefore, economic disincentives, behavior modification, and mandatory rules and regulations.

How to allocate resources among alternative strategies of planned social change and whether or not a single strategy will be sufficient or not depend on the distribution of population

in the four cells of the attitude-behavior discrepancy matrix. The more heterogeneous the cultural and economic backgrounds of people in a society, the less likely it is that all of them will be concentrated in any one cell. Therefore, in highly diverse and complex societies, it is necessary to utilize a mix of strategies for an optimal achievement of planned social change. If there are no differential coefficients of effectiveness as well as differential constraints associated with each strategy, the optimal allocation is, of course, proportional to the population distribution in the four cells for a given planned social change.

Analytical Framework for the Model

While it is relatively easy to conceptualize the concept of a strategy mix for planned social change, it is a slightly harder task to propose analytical procedures for estimating population distributions in the attitude-behavior discrepancy matrix. We propose two methods: a simple method and a more complex method.

The simple method rests on the proposition that attitude is a unidimensional phenomenon and can be reliably measured in terms of like-dislike, enjoy-hate, good-bad, favorable-unfavorable and the like semantic differentials. Since the strategy mix matrix mandates attitudes to be binary (positive or negative), it is proposed that a series of evaluative bipolar adjectives be used to obtain the binary judgments from the people. After a consistency check across comparable evaluative

judgments, it should be possible to reliably estimate whether a person has positive or negative attitude toward the social behavior in question. In a similar manner, his behavior could be measured by using one or more behavioral manifestations of a predefined social behavior to estimate whether a person is engaged or disengaged in that social behavior.

This is a highly simple procedure and can be very useful as a first cut to understand whether there is lopsided distribution in favor of a particular cell in the strategy mix matrix.

Alternatively, a more complex, and probably a more realistic approach is to measure a person's evaluative beliefs which underlie his positive or negative attitudes toward a social behavior. The cognitive structure underlying the attitudinal judgment can be assessed by qualitative research on two small groups of people who are engaged and disengaged in the behavior. Based on this information, it is possible to generate a multiattribute profile of evaluative beliefs on which to measure a person's attitude.

Given a multiattribute vector of attitudinal beliefs, it is now possible to propose a two group discriminant analysis between those who are engaged and those who are disengaged in a given social behavior. Thus, the multiattribute attitudinal profile represents the predictor set of variables and the dichotomous behavioral manifestation represents the criterion variable in a two group discriminant analysis.

Since the objective in discriminant analysis is to maximize the correlation between group membership and predictor variable profile, it is possible to measure the degree and direction of consistency or discrepancy between attitudes and behavior by the use of the classification procedures in the discriminant analysis. In other words, we should be able to estimate the proportion of people whose attitudes and behavior are consistent as well as those whose attitudes and behavior are inconsistent in each direction. For example, some people in the sample may have negative attitude profile even though they are engaged in a given behavior. The discriminant analysis model will clearly classify them as people who should not be engaged in that behavior. Similarly, there may be other people whose attitude profile is positive but they are not engaged in that behavior. The discriminant analysis model will classify them as people who should be engaged in that behavior. In short, the correct classifications in the discriminant analysis reflect the attitude-behavior consistency, and the misclassifications reflect the attitude-behavior discrepancy. The higher the positive correlation between group membership and the multiattribute attitude profile, the greater the attitude-behavior consistency. This will suggest the use of reinforcement and confrontation strategy mix. If the cost effectiveness and constraints are comparable between the two strategies, the resource allocation will be a function of the relative population distribution between those who are engaged and those who are disengaged in a given social behavior. This is represented in Table 2a.

On the other hand, if the correlation between group membership and multiattribute attitude profile is highly negative, there is a very high degree of attitude-behavior discrepancy. The classification matrix will have the highest rate of misclassification worse than by chance. This will clearly suggest the use of inducement and rationalization strategy mix. Again, if the cost effectiveness and constraints are comparable between the two strategies, the resource allocation should be proportional to the population distribution between those engaged and those disengaged in the social behavior. This is represented in Table 2b.

Finally, it is possible that there is no correlation between group membership and the multiattribute attitude profile, probably due to heterogeneity of the population. In that case, the classification matrix will have distribution among all the four cells proportional to chance distribution. There will be a relatively large number of people in each of the four cells of the attitude-behavior discrepancy matrix. In that case, the change agent should use a strategy mix of all the four types of major social change strategies. Once again, if the cost effectiveness and constraints are comparable among all the four types of strategies (reinforcement, inducement, rationalization and confrontation strategy), he should utilize them proportional to the cell distributions in the classification matrix. This is reflected in Table 2C.

Not only does the technique of discriminant analysis suggest something about the magnitude and direction of attitude-behavior discrepancy and the consequent managerial decision

Table 2

Classification Matrices Derived from Discriminant Analysis

2a. Complete Attitude-Behavior Consistency

Predicted \ Actual	Engaged	Disengaged
Engaged	✓	0
Disengaged	0	✓

2b. Complete Attitude-Behavior Discrepancy

Predicted \ Actual	Engaged	Disengaged
Engaged	0	✓
Disengaged	✓	0

2c. Attitude-Behavior Consistency and Discrepancy

Predicted \ Actual	Engaged	Disengaged
Engaged	✓	✓
Disengaged	✓	✓

with respect to the specific mix of strategies of planned change, it is also a microlevel analysis which enables the change agent to identify people in each cell and target a specific strategy to each of the four segments. This is a very important and useful outcome of the model since it enables the right strategy for the right subgroup of the total population. Furthermore, the multiattribute attitude profile also provides clues as to the substantive elements to be included in each of the targeted strategies.

Let us illustrate this with an example. Suppose we find a group of people who engage in birth control and those who do not engage in birth control. We measure their attitudes on a multiattribute profile consisting of cost, convenience, accessability, social taboo, and fear of side effects. Based on the two group discriminant analysis, we find that the most significant discriminating attributes are fear of side effects and cost. We also find that there is a group of people who have fear of side effects and have cost problem even though they are engaged in birth control. The rationalization strategy would consist of a safety campaign as well as lowering the cost of birth control targeted to this segment of the population.

On the other hand, there is another group of people who have a positive attitude with respect to side effects and cost of birth control but they are not engaged in birth control practices. The inducement strategy targeted to this group of

people would consist of improving the delivery system as well as putting social pressures to motivate them to practice birth control.

Finally, those who do not practice birth control and have a fear of side effects as well as high cost perception, the confrontation strategy should be targeted to this group consisting of clinical counseling, establishing mandatory product safety guidelines for the suppliers of birth control devices, and generating economic disincentives toward nonpractice of birth control.

It is relatively easy to identify the four segments of the total population by their socioeconomic demographic profiles. In addition, it may be useful to collect their values, activities and interests to pinpoint the role a particular social behavior plays in their daily life.

The change agent now has sufficient information about the target segments to plan the strategy mix with respect to both resource allocation and substantive content for each strategy. He can now decide which strategies to use based on population distribution in the strategy mix matrix; what specific attributes should he emphasize in his strategy based on the discriminant coefficients of the attitude profile; whom to target a specific strategy mix element based on the demographic profile of each of the segments and how to implement or communicate to each identified and targeted segment based on the life style and value profile of each of the segments in the population.

Discussion

While the model seems reasonable, there are at least two improvements which can be made.

The first improvement relates to extending the model to a situation where people are distributed as positive, negative or neutral in their attitudes. There are several examples in the area of planned social change where apathy seems to dominate and, therefore, people really don't care or do not have any positive or negative attitudes. Similarly, the social behavior in question may not be a dichotomous phenomenon but a continuous phenomenon of heavy vs. light usage.

In addition, the change agent may feel that his planning process is still unresolved when he has at his disposal eight or nine distinct strategies of social change but the model is crude enough to assist him in choosing only the four major types or processes of planned social change.

It is possible to refine the model of strategy mix to take into account the above limitations. The extended model is presented in Table 3. The extension of the model into a three by three matrix of positive-neutral-negative attitudes and regular-infrequent-nonuser behavior now enables the change agent to more concisely allocate his resources among the specific strategies with which he is familiar.

Table 3

Extended Model of Strategy Mix for Planned Social Change

		Desirable Behavior		
		Regular Users	Infrequent Users	Nonusers
Attitude	Positive	Reinforcements	Social Controls	Delivery Systems
	Neutral	Propaganda	Persuasion & Education	Education & Dissemination
	Negative	Economic Incentives	Economic Disincentives	Behavior Modification or Mandatory Changes

In many ways, the extended model basically provides an answer to the criticism that both attitudes and social behaviors may not be dichotomous but metric monotonic phenomena.

A second limitation of the conceptual model is that it is limited to a binary choice of engaging or nonengaging in social behavior. However, often the choice is not binary but multiple. For example, the choices of transportation modes for commuting purposes consist of driving, carpooling, trains or the bus transit system in any metropolitan area. In other words, the change agent must pinpoint what are the alternative options and estimate the degree of cross-elasticity of a given planned social change with respect to the competing alternatives. Thus, if he wants to increase carpooling behavior of people,

he must understand whether it will come from people who at present drive or from people who at present take the train or the bus. This is an important policy issue and the model needs to address itself to it if it can be useful.

One solution is to measure people's multiattribute attitude profiles toward the proposed social behavior but sample them from each of the competing behavior domains. For example, we can ask people to express their attitude toward carpooling although at present they are driving, taking the train, riding the bus, carpooling or bicycling to work. It is now possible to extend the model by utilizing the multiple group discriminant analysis. The classification table will be extended to all alternative options besides the carpooling behavior. An analysis of the classification matrix will then reveal those segments of the total population which is likely to be attracted toward carpooling behavior from each of the substitute modes of commuting.

Summary and Conclusions

This research paper has attempted to offer a conceptual model of strategy mix choice for planned social change. The fundamental axiom on which the framework is developed is the attitude-behavior discrepancy with respect to a given social behavior. The model suggests that the change agent must not think in terms of a universal strategy approach but seriously consider segmenting the total population and offer a mix of strategies on a selective basis from among the reinforcement, inducement, rationalization and confrontation strategies.

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